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Media Contact:
J. Lindsey Wolf, (408) 277-5597
Public Affairs Manager
Environmental Services Department

City's First Green Building Investment Achieves National Certification *West Valley Branch Library Honored*

San José --- Today, the U. S. Green Building Council recognized West Valley Branch Library in San José as the nation's – and the world's – first "green" library.

The preservation of mature redwood trees, a drought-tolerant landscape, and a mix of carefully shaded windows with clerestory windows and skylights are just some of the more visible features at the facility, which opened last May.

Approved under the City Council's Green Building Policy and constructed through the collaboration of three City departments – Public Works, the Library system, and Environmental Services – the library is also the City's first building to achieve the special distinction. A bronze plaque that will be mounted on the library was unveiled during this afternoon's City Council meeting by Christine Ervin, President and CEO of the USGBC and City officials.

Ervin applauded the City's role in "sending a signal to the marketplace that this kind of investment matters."

"We are very proud of this significant investment in green building," said Councilmember Linda J. LeZotte, the Council's leading proponent for energy efficiency. "San José is taking positive steps towards sustainability. Designing more buildings like West Valley will help the City reduce long-term operating costs while increasing community satisfaction."

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The building was designed and constructed to use 30% less energy and 50% less irrigation water than standard buildings. It also incorporates natural day lighting and a variety of chemical-free fabrics and materials to improve the indoor air quality and comfort for library patrons. Additionally, more than 25% of the materials used during the construction were made from recycled products, such as soda bottles. Twenty percent of the building materials were manufactured locally, contributing to the local economy.

Eight nations (Canada, Mexico, China, India, Japan, Spain, and Italy plus the United States) have registered projects with LEED™ (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), which is the accepted industry standard for evaluating and certifying green buildings. It was launched in the spring of 1999 by the U. S. Green Building Council, the nation's foremost coalition of leaders from across the building industry, government, and other organizations that are working to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable and healthy places to live and work. Half of the projects registered with USGBC are in California.

Design and construction of the library represents a successful collaboration among three City departments including the Library system, Public Works, and Environmental Services.

“Green building makes good sense,” noted Carl Mosher, director of Environmental Services. “Over the next 10 years, San José will be building up to 30 new libraries and community centers. If we pursue this path, we can reduce operating and maintenance costs by saving energy, water and other natural resources in addition to reusing certain materials.”

In October 2003, the State of California released an in depth analysis on the cost of building green. Entitled “*The Costs and Financial Benefits of Green Buildings*,” the report presents the most comprehensive study ever done on the costs and financial benefits of green buildings. The report concludes that the financial benefits exceed the cost by a factor of 10 to 1.

WALK-THROUGH OF LIBRARY: Library and Public Works officials will lead a walk-through of the West Valley Branch Library from 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, March 3, to highlight its green features. The library, a 20,000 square foot facility, is located at 1243 San Tomas Aquino Road one-half block east of Saratoga Avenue.